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CIA Looks For Faculty Contacts

By David Blum

Several University of Chicago professors have received calls from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in a manner each termed totally legitimate, and were asked general questions concerning foreign intelligence matters.

Information has been solicited from faculty by the CIA over the past 25 years, either before or after trips taken abroad. The agency asked them to respond to general questions concerning their areas of knowledge based on material gathered from foreign travel. No information is available on whether payments were made to any professors by the CIA. The report of the senate Intelligence Committee earlier this week indicated that payments were often made to professors through front organizations, without their knowledge.

"I don't see why, if the CIA asks me a question about a trip I've taken or am about to take, I shouldn't provide an answer," said Morton A. Kaplan, Professor of Political Science and an expert on Soviet affairs. "The CIA is an American institution, and I'm not against the United States."

The difficulty, said Mr. Kaplan, lies with professors who provide information to the CIA on a paid basis and keep that fact secret from both their sources of information and the institution for which they work.

"I'm opposed to surreptitious funding, but I don't think

the faculty here would be involved with anything surreptitious as far as the CIA is concerned," Mr. Kaplan said.

Norton S. Ginsburg, Professor of Geography, who has been called several times over the past 25 years by the CIA for information regarding work he has done abroad, believed that some Chicago faculty might be currently employed by the CIA to obtain information in other countries.

"I'd be astonished if there were no such people at the University of Chicago," said Mr. Ginsburg.

The agency's method of operation, Mr. Ginsburg said, includes calling professors who are going abroad for research purposes—often recipients of Fulbright scholarships—and providing them with questions relating to intelligence research.

"The last time they called me was seven or eight years ago, when I came back from some time at the University of New Delhi. They asked me what life was like in New Delhi and things like that," Mr. Ginsburg said.

He noted that the CIA has never asked him about specific individuals, and that only once was he asked in advance to pose certain questions.

"When they give you questions to ask and you get the answers under your standard identity as an academic, then you become their agent," Mr. Ginsburg said.

Arnold Harberger, Chairman of the Department of Economics who has extensive contacts in

Latin America, said that he has been contacted "two or three times in the past 20 years" by the CIA with questions concerning foreign intelligence matters.

"If I wanted to take a knife and slit my throat, I could think of no better way than by going around Latin America asking questions for the CIA. Those three letters work like a lightening rod down there," said Mr. Harberger, who was recently embroiled in a controversy along with Chicago economist Milton Friedman concerning their connections with the current Chilean government.

"They were just feeling me out, trying to see what would be my interest," said Mr. Harberger. "I decided that there would be too many adverse reverberations."

There was little reaction

among faculty to the Senate Intelligence Committee's CIA report released this week, which indicated that the agency made significant use of academics in their covert operations. None had any knowledge of University of Chicago faculty involvement with the CIA on a paid informant basis.

The New York Times recently reported an increase in recruiting on college campuses by the CIA, and noted that more college graduates are going to work for the agency now than during the 1960's. Anita Sandke, Director of the Office of Career Counseling and Placement, was not aware of such an effort at the University of Chicago.

"Occasionally a student will ask us for information about the CIA, and we send him down to the Chicago office. The recruiters don't come on campus, and we don't really know how many students have talked to them or have gone to work for them," Mrs. Sandke said.

At least two students in this year's graduating class plan to work for the CIA following graduation, according to reliable sources. Both students are master's degree candidates in International Relations, but neither could be reached for comment on the specific nature of their future positions with the agency.